



In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan

By Seth G. Jones

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In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan By Seth G. Jones

A definitive account of the American experience in Afghanistan from the rise of the Taliban to the depths of the insurgency.

After the swift defeat of the Taliban in 2001, American optimism has steadily evaporated in the face of mounting violence; a new “war of a thousand cuts” has now brought the country to its knees. *In the Graveyard of Empires* is a political history of Afghanistan in the “Age of Terror” from 2001 to 2009, exploring the fundamental tragedy of America’s longest war since Vietnam.

After a brief survey of the great empires in Afghanistan—the campaigns of Alexander the Great, the British in the era of Kipling, and the late Soviet Union—Seth G. Jones examines the central question of our own war: how did an insurgency develop? Following the September 11 attacks, the United States successfully overthrew the Taliban regime. It established security throughout the country—killing, capturing, or scattering most of al Qaeda’s senior operatives—and Afghanistan finally began to emerge from more than two decades of struggle and conflict. But Jones argues that as early as 2001 planning for the Iraq War siphoned off resources and talented personnel, undermining the gains that had been made. After eight years, he says, the United States has managed to push al Qaeda’s headquarters about one hundred miles across the border into Pakistan, the distance from New York to Philadelphia.

While observing the tense and often adversarial relationship between NATO allies in the Coalition, Jones—who has distinguished himself at RAND and was recently named by *Esquire* as one of the “Best and Brightest” young policy experts—introduces us to key figures on both sides of the war. Harnessing important new research and integrating thousands of declassified government documents, Jones then analyzes the insurgency from a historical and structural

point of view, showing how a rising drug trade, poor security forces, and pervasive corruption undermined the Karzai government, while Americans abandoned a successful strategy, failed to provide the necessary support, and allowed a growing sanctuary for insurgents in Pakistan to catalyze the Taliban resurgence.

Examining what has worked thus far—and what has not—this serious and important book underscores the challenges we face in stabilizing the country and explains where we went wrong and what we must do if the United States is to avoid the disastrous fate that has befallen many of the great world powers to enter the region.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Since 2001, RAND Corporation political scientist Jones (*The Rise of European Security Cooperation*) has been observing the reinvigorated insurgency in Afghanistan and weighing the potency of its threat to the country's future and American interests in the region. Jones finds the roots of the re-emergence in the expected areas: the deterioration of security after the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2002, the U.S.'s focus on Iraq as its foreign policy priority and Pakistan's role as a haven for insurgents. He revisits Afghan history, specifically the invasions by the British in the mid- and late-19th century and the Russians in the late-20th to rue how little the U.S. has learned from these two previous wars. He sheds light on why Pakistan—a consistent supporter of the Taliban—continues to be a key player in the region's future. Jones makes important arguments for the inclusion of local leaders, particularly in rural regions, but his diligent panorama of the situation fails to consider whether the war in Afghanistan is already lost. (July)

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Review

Offers a valuable window onto how officials have understood the military campaign.

From the Back Cover

Praise for *In the Graveyard of Empires*

"Seth Jones . . . has an anthropologist's feel for a foreign society, a historian's intuition for long-term trends, and a novelist's eye for the telling details that illuminate a much larger story. If you read just one book about the Taliban, terrorism, and the United States, this is the place to start."?Jeremi Suri, author of *Henry Kissinger and the American Century*

"A timely and important work, without peer in terms of both its scholarship and the author's intimate knowledge of the country, the insurgency threatening it, and the challenges in defeating it."?Bruce Hoffman, Georgetown University, author of *Inside Terrorism*

"A deeply researched and well-analyzed account of the failures of American policies in Afghanistan, *In the Graveyard of Empires* will be mandatory reading for policymakers from Washington to Kabul."?Peter Bergen, author of *Holy War, Inc.* and *The Osama bin Laden I Know*

"Seth Jones has combined forceful narrative with careful analysis, illustrating the causes of this deteriorating situation, and recommending sensible, feasible steps to reverse the escalating violence."?James Dobbins, author of *After the Taliban: Nation Building in Afghanistan*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marla Mestas:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with buddies is thing that usually you have done when you have spare time, after that why you don't try matter that really opposite

from that. Just one activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition info. Even you love In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan, you are able to enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout fellas. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its named reading friends.

Rick Briones:

This In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan is great guide for you because the content which is full of information for you who have always deal with world and get to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it information accurately using great plan word or we can state no rambling sentences included. So if you are read it hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan in your hand like finding the world in your arm, information in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no reserve that offer you world within ten or fifteen minute right but this publication already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hello Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt which?

Lisa Yates:

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Lester Baker:

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